

The MAID of the FOREST

By RANDALL PARRISH
ILLUSTRATED BY D. J. LAVIN
COPYRIGHT A. C. MCCLURG & CO., 1913

CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

He lowered himself into the stream, which was deep to the shore, as silently as a ghost. A dozen feet away I lost sight of him entirely amid the dim, dancing shadows. Then I followed with equal caution, my face turned up to the sky. It was a dark night, but with a few stars visible peeping down through rifts of cloud. The small river was not wide, nor the current particularly swift, and I had not been carried far down stream when the overhanging branches of the opposite bank gave shelter. I drew myself ashore, and sat there, shivering in my wet clothes, the night air chill, and stared anxiously about, and across to the shore we had just left.

I moved down the shore cautiously, keeping well below the concealing bank until I found Brady. He was crouched in the shadow of a great tree root, his whole attention riveted on the opposite side.

"There are no signs of pursuit?"

"Not that I can see. I have watched here some minutes, but there has been no movement along the bank. We will move on down stream."

It was hard walking amid the tangled roots, and we made slow work of it. Brady, in advance, stumbled once or twice, and I noticed, held one hand pressed against his side as though from pain, breathing heavily. To our left, but some distance away, a voice called, and was answered by another. So, toiling on, we came to a sharp bend in the stream.

"It must be about opposite here, Hayward," he said stopping, "the girl told you the boat would be. What is that lumping shadow yonder? Your eyes are younger than mine."

"It is a big tree bent down over the river; no doubt the one she meant."

"You see no movement?"

I strained my eyes, searching the dark shore inch by inch, but could perceive nothing; the lights of the fires were far away.

"It is still as death over there."

He shot a swift glance at me, as if the words pleased him little. In the dim starshine his face appeared ghastly white.

"Perhaps the days of miracles are not gone," he said doubtfully, "and Girty may have played fair. Anyhow there is nothing to be done now but test it. Come on, lad; we'll take to water again."

The cheerful note in his voice bolstered my own courage. We swam straight this time, with steady stroke, our eyes scanning the bank we were approaching. And the canoe was there, smuggled under the leaning tree, bow to bank, rendered shapeless by a covering of broken branches.

Concealed by the shade of the great tree I waded cautiously ashore and crept out into a maze of roots. The higher bank rose sheer before me. To the right there was an opening, as if a trail led down to the river, and revealed there against the upper sky, something moved. For an instant I could tell no more; then I recognized a human figure stealing cautiously toward me through the gloom. It moved silently as a spirit, and my heart beat fiercely as I rose up and stared. She was close upon me before I was sure.

"Rene."

"Oh," a little catch in the quick whisper; "then—then it is you, how—how did you come here?"

I drew her back into the deeper shadow, and told her the brief story in swift words, clinging to her hands, as I held her close. I could not distinguish her face, but she listened, her soft breath on my cheek.

"Oh, I am so glad—so glad, monsieur. I did not know until after I gave the signal. I—I came down here to be sure—to, to say good-by," she faltered, "and—and saw them waiting."

"Then it was treachery? The purpose was to kill us? Girty lied?"

"Yes, monsieur. You—you will not believe I knew? That I suspected such a thing?"

My handclasp tightened.

"No, dear, no; go on. Where are the men?"

"Most of them, ten or twelve as near as I could make out, are in a ravine at the edge of the camp, yonder close to the shore. There are three others up above here, hiding behind the bank."

"I see; the attack was to be made by those above as we crept along, and if either of us got away those three devils were to complete the job."

CHAPTER XXIII.

In the Woods.

"You must get into the canoe, Rene," I said shortly. "Come, we have no time to lose."

"I monsieur?"

"Yes, yes; I am not going to leave

you here for Hamilton to wreak his rage on. There is no time to argue now."

"But, monsieur—"

"Never mind that; will you go as I say?"

There was a silvery gleam of star on her upturned face, and I could see her eyes, startled, puzzled, half frightened, gazing up into mine. Then the long lashes drooped over them.

"Yes, monsieur," she said, her lips trembling. "I will go with you."

The dawn found me with the paddle, but Rene still wide awake. There was a thin, gray fog over the river, which turned to purple as the light strengthened, and we were at the apex of a great bend, the course of the stream ahead leading into the northwest. That was not our direction, and besides I felt if there was pursuit it would be safer far ashore. Just as the sun broke through the mist we came unexpectedly to the mouth of a small stream leading into the main river from the south. So thoroughly was it concealed by a thick growth of bushes, that we would have slipped by, had I not been skirting the shore closely, seeking some such opening. I headed the canoe straight in, pressing aside the branches to gain passage, and found beyond a narrow creek, up which we managed to paddle for several hundred yards. Then I stepped overboard, and dragged the light craft still higher, until I discovered a place of concealment behind a huge rotting log.

Here we left it, Rene and I bearing with us the guns and our small store of provisions. I had cut a cane for Brady, and, with its help, he managed to get along slowly, although sight of his face made my heart ache. Thus in single file we waded up the tiny stream, until we attained a ledge of rocks where our feet would leave no trail. Over these we toiled, helping each other, until we came to the upland, into an open forest, carpeted with autumn leaves. By this time Brady was too exhausted to go further, sinking helplessly on the ground. Rene also looked worn and heavy-eyed, and I had no heart to urge them on. We ate sparsely of what food we had, but Brady barely touched his portion. I wrapped him in our only blanket, and the three of us slept.

It was the gray dawn when mademoiselle awoke me, shaking me soundly ere I could be aroused.

"What is it?"

"He is gone, monsieur! Monsieur Brady is gone."

"Gone? You mean left camp. Why that is impossible; he could barely walk."

"But he is not here, monsieur," she insisted. "See; it was there he lay. I will tell you all I know. I woke up in the night and thought of him, of how hard it was for so strong a man to be so weak and ill. Then I got up and went over quietly to be sure he was all right. But he was awake, monsieur, staring up at the sky with eyes wide open. He saw me, and said he was nervous and could not sleep. No, he told me he was not in pain, but complained of being cold. I spread more leaves over him, and he said that was better. Then—he took my hand and kissed it, and begged me to go back and—and lie down. He was very nice and gentle, and smiled at me. So I went back, and crept into my leaves, and tried to sleep. He did not move, yet I lay there a long while thinking, I—think I cried a little, monsieur, for I felt so sorry. At last I slept again. It was just a little light when I awoke once more, and my first memory was of him. I went over there and—and he was gone. I could see where he had rested in the leaves, and the blanket on the ground, but—but he was not there. I sought for him, but there was no trace—nothing. So I came and woke you."

I was on my feet, a feeling of dread tugging at my heart. I felt that I already knew what had happened, yet I could not tell her—not now, not until I was sure.

"He could not have gone far, Rene," I said hastily. "Perhaps to the river for a drink. Come, we will see."

The ground about the camp had been so trampled by our feet that, at first, I could not pick up the trail. Finally, taking a wider circle, I came upon softer soil and the imprint of his moccasins. I knew they were his because of one foot dragging, and the impression of his cane. They led down toward the river, and I followed swiftly, the girl close behind, until we stood at the edge of the stream. The man's trail ended there. I explored the bank for some distance up and down, but without result. There were tears glistening in Rene's eyes, as I came back—she also was beginning to un-

derstand. Without a word I waded out into the water, and swam across to the other shore. There was nothing there—no sign, no mark of any description—and I came back to where she waited, wading out with dripping garments to the bank.

"There—there was nothing, monsieur?"

"Nothing," I answered gravely. "He has not crossed over." I hesitated an instant, but could not resist the questioning horror in her eyes. "You understand, do you not?"

"You—you think," she faltered, "that Monsieur Brady has—has killed himself?"

"He has given his life for others, my girl—for you and me, and those soldiers of St. Clair's."

She stood a moment, silent, tears on her cheeks, looking blindly out at the water. Then she sank upon her knees, holding the crucifix against her face. I could see the movement of her lips, but heard nothing; only I knew that she prayed for his soul, and my own eyes were moist as I knelt beside her. Then I lifted her up by the hand, and we went back up the hill to the camp.

There was nothing to hope for in waiting, and all our duty lay beyond. Without the exchange of a word we packed what few things we had, and started, following the bank of the stream.

It was a raw November morning that we came unexpectedly upon St. Clair's outpost. The ground was covered with snow, and the little pools were skimmed over with thin ice. It had been too cold to rest, and we had walked much of the night, afraid to build a fire. Chilled to the marrow by the icy wind that swept through the trees and buffeted us, I had wrapped the girl in our only blanket, fastening it about her head and face, hurt as I did so by the dumb, patient, bewildered look in her eyes. She tried to protest, yet at my first stern word ceased and wrapped herself closely in the folds. I was in front, breaking the trail that she might have easier marching, when suddenly a man stepped out of a thicket, and with gun at my breast roughly commanded a halt. I paused instantly, uncertain as to which side the challenger was on, yet a glance at his face and dress reassured me.

"Who are you, an' what do yer want?" he asked suspiciously.

"I am an officer of the Fort Harmar garrison," I answered, "with news from the north. To what command do you belong?"

"The Kentucky militia," he acknowledged sullenly. "Colonel Oldham."

"Where is your colonel?"

"Back yonder on that rise o' ground; you kin go on, but I'll keep an eye on yer."

We left him, following the direction pointed out, hearing him call to some one in our rear, yet paying no heed. The very ease with which he had passed us on was evidence enough of lax discipline, and small conception of the danger of the command. There was a plain track through the snow, which led to a camp fire blazing cheerily in a grove of trees, with maybe a dozen men clustered about it. No one appeared to notice us as we drew near.

"Which is Colonel Oldham?" I asked, glancing about the group. One stood up, a smooth-faced, ruddy-cheeked man of fifty, with iron-gray hair, and eyes that looked as if they laughed easily.

"That is my name," he said shortly. "What is it? St. Denis, man?" as his glance swept over me, "you look as if you had been far from the settlements and had a hard trip."

"I have, sir; I come from the Maumee. I am an officer of regulars with news of importance for St. Clair."

Every eye was on me now and Oldham took a step nearer.

"The Maumee!" he exclaimed. "Ay, that is a journey. News for St. Clair, you say—what news? There was a rumor down below that the Indians of the northwest were mustering. Know you anything of that?"

"They have already mustered, sir. I was at their rendezvous. Even now they are at my heels—the whole of them, Shawnees, Miami, Delaware, Wyandots and, for all I know, as many more. There are white renegades with them, and English officers I suspect—I saw Hamilton myself on the Maumee, and he evidently was managing affairs."

"Well, sir, I believe it, but I'll be hanged if you can make St. Clair. The arrogant old fool may listen to you, but I doubt even that. He thinks this is a pleasure party we are on. What do you think he did a week ago?"

I looked at him uncomplaining, stunned by such ruminous words openly spoken.

"Sent back a whole regiment of regulars on a wild-goose chase after deserters, and we within fifty miles of the Miami towns."

"What force have you here?"

"Less than fourteen hundred—all militia but one regiment. From the Maumee, ensign? And did you come through alone with that squaw?"

I glanced back at her, standing silently behind me, the blanket drawn over her head and face.

"Take it off, Rene," I said quietly.

"Yes, monsieur."

Her hands obediently threw the wrapping aside, permitting it to drape over her shoulders. She lifted her

head, and stood facing them, with eyes centering upon Oldham. He gasped, and jerked the hat from off his head.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered. "A white woman?"

"A French girl, sir, whom I found with the Wyandots. Can you send us back to St. Clair?"

He stared at her so long, hat still in hand, that I thought he did not hear. An officer touched him on the shoulder and spoke a word.

"Ah, yes, certainly—St. Clair. At once, sir, but I don't envy you your reception. By Jove, I lost my wits seeing such a woman as that here in this hole. Someone send Masters here."

He came quickly, a youngish lad, with white hair and eyebrows, but intelligent face, who never took his eyes off Rene. Oldham spoke brusquely.

"Take this officer and the—this lady to General St. Clair at once. Tell Butler I say it is important, that he be given immediate interview. Here, wait! get the lady a horse somewhere. Captain, can he take yours?"

"With pleasure, sir; I will fetch the animal."

They watched us depart until we had crossed the ridge, Masters and I trudging through the snow at the horse's head. Rene had drawn up her blanket, but I could see her eyes watching me, when I glanced around at her. It was not long, however, until we came out of the forest, into a bit of lowland near the river, where a dozen tents, grimy and dirty looking, stood on the bank. There were soldiers everywhere, gathered about the camp fires, with a few guards patrolling beats along the forest edge. Masters led the way through the motley crowd up to the central tent. There was delay there, Rene sitting motionless in the saddle, and I waiting impatiently beside her. At last Masters came back.

"He will see you, sir."

"Very well; are there any women in camp?"

"A few, sir; 'non-com' wives mostly, washerwomen and cooks; they are in those two tents there—the officers' kitchens."

"Take the lady over there, and leave her in good hands. Rene."

She looked down at me.

"Yes, monsieur."

"This soldier will take you to some women who will take care of you until I come. You will wait for me."

"Yes, monsieur."

I waited until they started, and then advanced to the tent. A tall, slender man, in a colonel's uniform, pointed the way within, and I stepped through the narrow opening. The interior was plain—a bearskin stretched on the ground, two officers on campstools against the canvas; a sentry beside the open flap standing motionless; a rude table of one unplanned board, and behind it, seated, St. Clair. He was a spare man, with broad shoulders and prominent nose, wearing a long queue of thick, gray hair, which was plainly visible below his three-cornered hat. He was attired in blanket coat, with hood dangling down his back.

"Well, sir," he snapped, "Colonel Oldham says you bring news. Who are you?"

"Ensign Hayward of Fort Harmar," I answered, bringing my hand up in salute. "I was sent with a message to the Wyandots."

The stern lines of his face broke into a grim smile.

"Ah, yes, I recall that. One of Harmar's fool notions. Told him as much when I got back. Well, your peace offering didn't do much good, did it? I hear there is hell brewing in those north woods."

"It is already brewed, sir. The tribes have got together to crush you. They rendezvoused on the Maumee."

"Huh! that is a ways away. No great danger from that source till we're ready. What tribes were there, do you know?"

"I saw them, sir; Wyandots, Pottawatomies, Shawnees, Delaware and Miami. There were also some Ojibwas, and a sprinkling of others, mostly young warriors."

"Who heads the conspiracy?"

"Little Turtle, of the Miami, but there are Englishmen with them also; Hamilton himself was there."

"The cursed hound; so you were there, with them, hey? A prisoner?"

"Yes, general; a scout named Stephen Brady and I. We got away by means of a canoe on the river."

"Where is Brady? I know the old coon."

"He died, sir, and I came on alone."

"No one spoke, and I went on."

"It was a hard journey, and there were many delays on the way. I came as quickly as I could, sir, but I don't think the savages are far behind."

"Oh, don't you, indeed," sarcastically. "It was not advice I was asking, and as to what is in front of us my own scouts keep me posted. You're young, and easily frightened. I happen to know there isn't a hostile Indian within fifty miles of us—not a bloody one. I don't care what they do up on the Maumee. We'll go on to the Miami towns tomorrow, raze them, and be back to the Ohio before that bunch gets started. I doubt if there is a shot fired. It's all a big bluff, sir; we've got them frightened half to death. I wrote Washington as a month ago."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

MRS. WILLIAMS' LONG SICKNESS

Yields To Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Elkhart, Ind.:—"I suffered for fourteen years from organic inflammation, female weakness, pain and irregularities. The pains in my sides were increased by walking or standing on my feet and I had such awful bearing down feelings, was depressed in spirits and became thin and pale with dull, heavy eyes. I had six doctors from whom I received only temporary relief. I decided to give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial and also the Sanative Wash. I have now used the remedies for four months and cannot express my thanks for what they have done for me."



"If these lines will be of any benefit you have my permission to publish them."—Mrs. SADIE WILLIAMS, 455 James Street, Elkhart, Indiana.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs, contains no narcotic or harmful drugs, and to-day holds the record of being the most successful remedy for female ills we know of, and thousands of voluntary testimonials on file in the Pinkham laboratory at Lynn, Mass., seem to prove this fact.

If you have the slightest doubt that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you, write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (confidential) Lynn, Mass., for advice. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman, and held in strict confidence.

Your Liver Is Clogged Up

That's Why You're Tired—Out of Sorts—Have No Appetite.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS

will put you right in a few days.

They do your duty.

Cure Constipation, Biliousness, Indigestion and Sick Headache.

SMALL PILL. SMALL DOSE. SMALL PRICE.

Genuine must bear Signature

W. D. Wood

LOSSES SURELY PREVENTED

by Carter's Little Liver Pills. Low-price, fresh, reliable; preferred by Western stockmen because they protect where other vaccines fail.

Write for booklet and testimonials. 10-cent package, Black Leg Pills \$1.00. 25-cent package, Black Leg Pills \$4.00. The any tubercle, but Carter's best.

The simplicity of Carter's products is due to over 11 years of specializing in vaccines and serum only.

Just as Carter's. It's unquestionable, order direct.

THE CUTLER LABORATORY, Berkeley, California

Interested.

"My dear, you ought to pass up frivolous things and take an interest in deep subjects. Take history, for instance. Here is an interesting item. Gessler, the tyrant, put up a hat for the Swiss to salute."

The lady was a trifle interested.

"How was it trimmed?" she inquired.

Contrary Signs.

"The wind is rising."

"That means falling weather."

—Baltimore American.

What makes a smoke good?

It isn't shape—it's good tobacco! Pipe—cigar—cigarette—all are good if the tobacco is good.

The tobacco in Fatima Cigarettes is good—gloriously good!

Get acquainted with its mild yet satisfying Turkish blend.

Legat's Mypa Tobacco Co.

20 for 15¢

FATIMA

TURKISH CIGARETTE

MADE IN U.S.A.

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES

10 CIGARETTES